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Kite Runner—Pages 243-371

**Summary:** The last third of Khaled Hosseini’s book, *The Kite Runner*, is about Amir’s journey into Afghanistan to find his nephew Sohrab. Amir’s driver, Farid, takes him on the same path to Kabul that Amir took to escape to America and he takes this moment to recap the events that he and his father went through to escape the horrors of the first war. During the travel to the orphanage that Sohrab is theoretically located, Amir takes time to explain his thoughts about the difference between the second war’s destruction that has been shown on a television in America and what he sees in person on the road to Kabul. He takes special notice of the ruins of Russian tanks and jeeps as well as the crumbling villages they pass.

When Farid and Amir arrive in Kabul, they head to the orphanage in hopes that they can collect Sohrab and get out of the war torn city. When they approach the door of the orphanage, they are denied entrance by the orphanage director Zaman to Amir’s childhood house. After convincing the caring man that they were not with the Taliban and that Amir was Sohrab’s uncles and he planned to take him away, Zaman finally allowed them entrance. They walked casually into his office, and the director explained that he truly hoped that Amir was going to take Sohrab away because he does not deserve the fate that has been bestowed upon him. Zaman explained to them that every week a Taliban officer would come to the orphanage and give the director money to buy the two hundred and fifty orphans the necessities so they could go on living, the only thing that he wanted in return was one of the young girls and for some unknown reason he took Sohrab one time. He reassured Amir and Hassan that the girls always returned to the orphanage within a week, but Farid was outraged. Being a father himself, he jumped across the desk in the small office and started strangling Zaman because he was selling children. The only way Amir was able to get Farid off of the director was to tell him that the children were watching and that his act was scaring them. Reluctantly he let go of the director and in efforts to get the pair away from him as soon as possible, Zaman explained that they could find the Taliban officer who took Sohrab at the soccer game tomorrow.

The next day rolls around and before the game Farid drives Amir to the house he spent his childhood in. He is both outraged and in disbelief when he approaches a house that used to be so familiar to him. There was a foreign jeep in the driveway that was leaking fluids that stained what seemed to be a much narrower driveway than he remembered. The windows were cracked or broken and the yard was in disarray, but what he truly came to see was the pomegranate tree that Hassan and he used to spend their time together. He was pleased to find the inscription he craved as a child still upon its trunk. It read “Amir and Hassan. The Sultans of Kabul.” The pair then rushes to the stadium where the soccer game is being held and search for the Taliban officer that Zaman described. It wasn’t until half time that he was discovered and he was only discovered because during the half time a pair of Afghani’s were stoned to death by him. Amir quickly arraigns a meeting with the man after the soccer game and heads to the meeting location as soon as he possibly can.

Fearful of the Taliban, Farid waits in the car as Amir heads into the mansion that the Taliban officer resides. Once inside, he is escorted into the office by one of the Taliban officer’s guards and quickly puts his thoughts together so that he can get Sohrab and leave as fast as possible. When the officer walks in and casually sits in the chair across from Amir, they get to the point of their meeting immediately. During the very brief introduction, Amir’s fake beard is torn off and the officer recognizes him and Amir finally figures out the officer’s identity, it was no one other than his childhood bully Assef. Soon after this reunion Sohrab is called into the room, and as his assigned job, he dances for Assef and approaches him once the dance is concluded. Having never seen Amir before, Sohrab is too fearful to look at Amir, but once he learns that Amir wanted to take him away from Assef, he cannot help himself from smiling at him. The meeting seemed to be going smoothly and Amir almost made it out of the mansion with Sohrab free of charge, until Assef recalled the childhood debt that Amir owed him. Assef wanted to collect on his threat that he would teach both Amir and Hassan a lesson for defying him and since he raped Hassan, Amir was his next target. Acknowledging the fact that he deserved the beating that was about to endure, Amir doesn’t run away from his fate. He instead takes punch after punch that Assef delivers with almost appears to be content. It is only after Assef had broken several of Amir’s bones that the fight was brought to an abrupt stop; the pause was due to the fact that Sohrab shot a bronze ball into Assef’s eye socket. Sohrab drags Amir the best he can out of the mansion and Farid helps the child get Amir into the car and the trio flees the mansion.

The next part of the book consist of Amir slipping in and out of consciousness in a hospital from all of his injuries as well as Amir trying to bridge the gap between him and his nephew. Due to the fact that Sohrab was sexually abused by Assef like his father was, he is rather quiet and it takes a considerable amount of time for him to warm up to Amir. It wasn’t until after Amir explained to Sohrab that he was his uncle that the pair truly started bonding and after a couple days, Amir asks Sohrab if he wanted to come and live with his wife Soraya and him in America. With his agreement a another large problem surfaced, because there was no official documentation of the death of Hassan and his wife, Sohrab was technically and orphan therefore Amir could not adopt him legally. Amir spoke to Soraya who was pulling strings with her friends in INS, the adoption director in the American embassy, and even an adoption lawyer to try and find away to adopt Sohrab without putting him in another orphanage, but after a couple weeks that seemed like the only option available in the time that they were given, since Amir was sure that Assef would be searching for the two of them. Amir finally broke the news to Sohrab that the only way he’d be able to take him with him to America would be to have him live in an orphanage for a couple days until Amir could sign papers that stated Sohrab was his son. This news broke Sohrab’s heart and severed the bond that had been built between him and Amir. However, that night Soraya called to inform Amir that her friends in INS would be able to assign Sohrab a visa so that he could come live with them in the United States. Overjoyed Amir rushed into the bathroom to tell Sohrab the exciting news, but what he saw horrified him.

Sohrab had attempted to take him life that night, but luckily the doctors were able to revive him and soon after him and Amir headed to the United States, but Sohrab reverted back to his quiet and shy attitude and it never changed. Soraya was heartbroken because she was so excited that she would finally have a son, since she could not have one herself, and had all these things planned that the two of them could do together, but Sohrab wanted none of it. He stayed in his room most of the time and when he was up and about no one ever noticed him.

One day Amir and his family headed to the park where the Afghanistan people who lived in America were throwing a party. There were all kinds of Afghan traditions going on including Kite Running. Amir coaxed Sohrab into participating and shared with him the one activity that he and his father looked forward to every year. Amir cut down an opponent’s kite and turned to Sohrab and asked if he wanted him to run it for him. Sohrab didn’t say anything, but he slightly nodded and with that Amir took off after the one thing that would make Sohrab smile and stated, “For you a thousand times over.”

**Analysis:** This section of the book held my attention from start until finish. In fact I read the entire thing in one sitting. I really enjoyed how the author tied all of the seemingly unimportant events together to form a powerful conclusion that had me guessing what would happen next at the beginning of each chapter. I really liked the idea of Amir having to make up for the “crimes” he committed against Hassan through Sohrab. I thought that it made the story realistic and it applied dimensions to it. It made Amir’s generous deeds seem not quite as pure as they would if Sohrab was anyone else’s son. Not saying that what Amir did was bad, but it kind of related his actions to blood money in a sense and I felt this gave the story a more interesting tone. We all know that no one is perfect and I appreciate the effort Khaled Hosseini put into Amir’s character. He is extremely relatable to because although toward the end of the book he could be regarded as a Good Samaritan, the negative actions he committed during his childhood drove him to be this way.

I like the way that things took such a negative path in Amir’s life in the latter half of this story because I know that the beginning I kept thinking to myself that Amir was getting away with everything and I personally hate that. I don’t like the idea of people getting away with “bad” things especially if that “bad” thing hurt someone close to them and they didn’t own up to it.

**Application:** So after reading this entire book I would say the most prominent human characteristic that spends time and culture would be guilt. Throughout this entire story Amir is being haunted by what he did to Hassan in his childhood and it is because of his guilt that he feels compelled to do whatever is necessary to save Sohrab, including almost getting beaten to death by his old childhood bully. Even during the time he was being beaten by this bully, Amir’s sense of guilt made him feel as though this was a fair punishment for what Hassan had gone through because he was too afraid to step in and save his best friend. Another reason why guilty is the prominent human characteristic in this story is because another character, Rahim Khan, preys on Amir’s guilt to push him to save Sohrab from his awful life in Afghanistan. Without this element, the story wouldn’t nearly be as interesting or dynamic.